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# The Palimpsest

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## THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE

THE PALIMPSEST, issued monthly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, is devoted to the dissemination of Iowa History. Supplementing the other publications of this Society, it aims to present the materials of Iowa History in a form that is attractive and a style that is popular in the best sense—to the end that the story of our Commonwealth may be more widely read and cherished.

BENJ. F. SHAMBAUGH

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## THE MEANING OF PALIMPSEST

In early times a palimpsest was a parchment or other material from which one or more writings had been erased to give room for later records. But the erasures were not always complete; and so it became the fascinating task of scholars not only to translate the later records but also to reconstruct the original writings by deciphering the dim fragments of letters partly erased and partly covered by subsequent texts.

The history of Iowa may be likened to a palimpsest which holds the records of successive generations. To decipher these records of the past, reconstruct them, and tell the stories which they contain is the task of those who write history.

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# THE PALIMPSEST

EDITED BY RUTH A. GALLAHER

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## Green Pastures and Tall Corn

The beginning of Iowa's semi-centennial year might well have been a time of deep discouragement for the farmers. Years of accumulated deficiency in rainfall, prolonged financial and industrial depression, along with acute uncertainty regarding future governmental policies, were enough, it would seem, to cast a deep gloom over the annual meeting of the State Agricultural Society when it assembled at the State capital on January 7, 1896. On the contrary, the whole spirit of the gathering, as indicated in the proceedings, was hopeful and confident. Plans were made for an active year which anticipated a reviving and extending prosperity.

Any doubts that may have remained were dispelled by an inspiriting address from the dynamic president of the State Agricultural College, William M. Beardshear, who took as his text the prediction of the United States Secretary of Agriculture in his recent report that the success of the

American farmer would in the future depend "more upon mental than upon manual effort."

A discussion of the paper was enlivened by vigorous expressions of personal opinions, pointed by racy stories. Following this, a resolution was offered that since Iowa was "the greatest agricultural state of the American union" and as the corn crop was "the chief source of wealth to the state", the Society would "adopt the stalk of corn as its permanent badge". Thereupon, John Cownie, the energetic Scotch leader in livestock improvement who was shortly to become the head of the State Society, moved an amendment, which was heartily accepted, to add to the design "A Fat Pig". The emblem well symbolized the peculiar intermingling of the interests and activities of cultivation and husbandry which has characterized the economy of the Corn Belt.

Traditionally, from the time of Cain and Abel and from earliest agricultural records, there have been bitter and at times exterminating conflicts between the herder of flocks and the tiller of the soil, as well as between rival groups of husbandmen. These ancient feuds were reënacted in most realistic fashion upon the American plains. Rival stock companies overstocked the range and fought for watering places. The rancher sought, legally and illegally, to enclose the open range, while the

range interests endeavored to destroy all obstructions to the "free grass". Both claimants abominated the home-making "nester" who started the process of breaking the virgin sod. Most violent and internecine of all were the desperate "wars" between cattlemen and sheepmen.

Iowa's unexampled advantages for cultivation made the transition from the open range to enclosed fields remarkably rapid. From the beginning of settled farming in the late thirties, livestock was kept for family needs and for limited sale or barter: a few cows provided milk and butter, scrub sheep furnished wool adequate for household processing, and coarse, sturdy hogs rooted out an existence on the "mast" in the timbered areas. Power for cultivation and hauling was provided by yokes of oxen or, when necessary, of oxen and cows.

By the next decade, with the extension of settlement onto the open prairies and the gradual growth of markets, flocks and herds began to be built up. The abundant, succulent grass on public or absentee-owned lands was utilized by individual families or by groups of neighbors who hired, for a small fee per head of stock, a youthful shepherd or cowherd.

But it is significant that, while there was this communal use of the unbroken prairie, the inter-

ests of the individual proprietor were recognized and safeguarded from the earliest days. The settler's "rights" to his holding, whether based on government warrant or "squatter's law", were recognized. Territorial laws provided for taking up estrays and gave protection against roaming bulls and stallions. In 1870 voters in each county were allowed to vote for the "restraint" of stock from the neighbor's crops. Two years later this right of voting on the "herd law" was extended to townships.

The most positive inducement for the settler and his plow was, however, the land itself. Farms quickly supplanted the range. By the seventies "the range" had moved westward from its first base in the southeastern counties to the Missouri River and northward into the swamps of the Wisconsin drift. By another decade herding on any important scale was confined to the northwestern counties, and by the nineties organized grazing had moved north and west outside Iowa's borders. What preëmption and the swamp land, railroad, and educational grants left, the homesteader acquired.

In the earlier days the wide expanse of unsettled prairie with its natural plant and animal life brought a certain thrill of adventure and sense of freedom to a boy mounted on a fleet pony and ac-

companied by a dependable dog, as Hamlin Garland and Herbert Quick have recalled from first-hand experiences. Later, in the midst of cultivated areas, herding had the tameness and tedium of "baiting the cows" in the older regions. Laurence Larson found such supervision a tiresome chore, though his brothers in northern Iowa relieved the monotony by preëmpting the pasture area of a hill which they defended against rivals in a miniature cattle war.

Conflict between settlers and herders — especially those working for cattle companies — for the limited open areas of the western counties in the last years of ranging became, in the restrained expression of John A. Hopkins, the historian of the beef cattle industry in Iowa, "very unpleasant". The herds ate or trampled the wild hay that the settlers planned to stack for winter forage, the farmers in turn tried to stampede the herds. There were mass meetings, resolutions, violent verbal battles, and threats of shootings which fortunately did not come off. The contest was too unequal for prolonged conflict. When confronted by an extending phalanx of farmsteads protected by barbed-wire, the stock rangers had to seek the unsettled open spaces of the last frontier. The heart of the prairies was too valuable for such a primitive utilization. Transition to a diversified

economy awaited only adequate markets and marketing facilities.

Early markets were restricted to drives on the hoof to regional centers. The extension of railroads and the development of terminal stockyards went far to commercialize the whole meat industry. The refrigeration shipping devices, invented in the seventies, made possible cross-country and trans-ocean shipping of meats and laid the foundation for large-scale packing plants with the great localized center at Chicago.

The packing business in Iowa was started in a small way by merchants in the Mississippi River towns who were forced to combine elemental processing with their mercantile activities. "Pork houses" were established in the forties for processing hogs. The industry gradually moved nearer to centers of supply in Sioux City and such strategically located interior points as Waterloo, Cedar Rapids, Ottumwa, Des Moines, and Mason City. In recent times Iowa packers have processed more than half the hogs, sheep, and calves and about a third of the cattle marketed from Iowa. The growth and extension of trucking has greatly facilitated and economized livestock marketing of all kinds.

With its unexampled advantages in production and marketing and its alert settlers, Iowa was des-

tined to become the great livestock State of the nation, the most typical representative of the Corn Belt economy. The Hawkeyes were able to profit by the experiences of the Buckeyes, Hoosiers, and Suckers; and cropping was never carried to as great extremes as on the earlier frontiers.

The trend toward diversification of crops and the combination of crops and livestock appeared early in the life of the State and was encouraged and aided at every step by agricultural journals, agricultural societies, the State Agricultural College, and the Federal Department of Agriculture.

The introduction of machinery for cultivation and harvesting led to the displacement of the "trailing-footed ox" by the horse and mule. New markets for horses were found in the cities and in the overland hauling business, while military commissary departments became important customers. Iowa became famous for its production of the standard draft breeds for which a large domestic and foreign demand was found before the turn of the century. The peak was reached in the early years of the first World War. After that time the tractor occasioned a rapid and general mechanization of farm power. There remains, however, a supplemental farm use and a possibly expandable market for special riding and driving types of horses.

After an abortive effort to finish Texas steers on Iowa grass, it became evident that Iowa was best adapted to the rearing of the standard beef breeds, of which the State became a leading importer, and to the finishing of "feeder" stock secured from the range. In cattle production Iowa took rank next to Texas.

Something of the same trend may be seen in sheep production: from wool to mutton, to lamb feeding, in which the prairie Commonwealth along with the plains States of Colorado and Nebraska are the big three. But the State's most dominant and spectacular achievement in the production of the nation's meat supply has been in the selection, adaptation, and mass production of that "most thorough domestic animal . . . the hog." The corn-hog ratio is the key to the distinctive economy of the Corn Belt and Iowa raises upward of a fifth of the nation's pork supply, more than twice as many hogs as the nearest competing State.

Dairying and poultry raising, starting in a supplementary way, have in certain areas become so fully specialized with highly bred animals and fowls and with the application of advanced methods and techniques as to contribute very materially to the food output and total income of Iowa.

It is an interesting and significant fact that all of the outstanding applications of "technology on

the farm" as applied in Iowa, in breeding, nutrition, prevention and eradication of diseases, new and improved crops and cultivation systems, mechanization, marketing, modernized housing, and the service of transportation and communication utilities, have not led to the creating of new systems of agriculture but rather to the strengthening and perpetuating of the existing corn-livestock economy on the family-sized farm.

The Prairie Plains have been termed, without straining a figure of speech, the bread-basket and meat-platter of the nation. Today there is the demand from Europe that the baskets and platters be passed across the ocean. The inter-dependence of agriculture and industry which extreme specialization created two generations ago has been renewed in intensified form by the ravages and disorganization of total warfare.

For many years there has been a growing recognition of the need for diverting a greater proportion of cultivated crops from feed to food and for the more economical fattening, processing, and distributing of our meat-supplying livestock. Theories and possibilities have now become conditions and realities; the future has arrived and the supreme test is upon us. The Corn Belt is faced with the greatest challenge of modern agriculture.

EARLE D. ROSS

# On the Way to Iowa

In the spring of 1866, Amaziah and Cornelia Cannon with their three children, Emeline, Sidney, and Ettie, left Columbia County, Wisconsin, to come to Cerro Gordo County, Iowa, where they settled on a farm near Mason City.

Emeline Cannon was sixteen at the time of this trip, and like teen-age girls even today, she kept a diary, in which she recorded the problems and the costs of travel in pioneer times. Here are her entries for April 23rd to May 3rd, 1866, on the trip across southeastern Wisconsin and northern Iowa.

*Monday April 23rd, 1866, noon.* Stopped about 9½ miles this side of Lodi [Wisconsin] to eat our dinner and feed the teams. Sidney says "I wish we were going back after dinner." (evening) Got to Lodi before supper and put up at the Lion House. We are very tired tonight. The roads were very bad part of the way. (6½ dollars)

*Tuesday noon April 24th.* Stopped at noon 10 miles from Lodi at 4 corners where there was about 50 Dutch young ones and I could not count any more. I presume there was about a dozen

that was not big enough to get out yet. It is very bad road and we have come but 10 miles. (evening) Passed Mazomanie about 4 o'clock, got to Dover and put up. It has been very bad roads and we have come about 25 miles. The bridges are all gone and roads all torn up. Bill $2.00 last night.

*Wednesday noon April 25th.* It rained last night but not enough to make it very muddy. It is pleasant today and the roads are good. We have been through some splendid valleys today. We passed Arena this morning and I saw a train of freight cars and there were 31 cars. We are eating our dinner by the side of the road. (evening) We came up a hill this afternoon that was about 2 miles long and passed rocks that were larger than any house. Came on to the old military road this afternoon and came across the prairie. Put up at a large farm house at 5 o'clock. Ma is tireder tonight than she has been before since we started. We have come about 25 miles. We are 3 miles north of Dodgeville. I rode in the buggy this afternoon and drove the colts. It has been very pleasant today. Bill $2.75.

*Thursday 26th.* Pleasant today and good roads. It is warm and good prairie. There is some splendid farms along here. Staid at the Fennimore Center house a tavern on the prairie.

Have come about 30 miles today. Did not stop until after sunset. Came through Wingville this afternoon. $3.00.

*Friday 27th.* The wind blows awfully and it is very warm. We passed an emigrant wagon with 2 span of horses on it going to California and a little while ago we passed 3 teams going to Iowa. We are going across prairie again today. Ma is not very well today. Went through Bridgeport and came across the Wisconsin Bridge tonight. The river is very high and rising all the time. We came through where the water was over the wheels and running awful fast. The little horses nearly went down 2 or 3 times. The water is rising all the time. We are the last ones across and the bridge will be gone in an hour. We got to Prairie du Chien just at dark. We have come 32 miles today but we can't get across the Mississippi. The water is higher than it has been for 15 years. It is 6 miles from the Wisconsin River to Prairie du Chien.

*Saturday 28th.* Ettie don't want any breakfast and she says she is going to drink enough coffee to pay her fare. No prospect of crossing the river. The river is tearing houses and barns down today and keeps rising. The Wisconsin Bridge went down last night. We are staying at the Otto's Hall in Prairie du Chien. Came here last night

and will have to stay till we can go across the river. I went down to the river today and it was overflowed about half a mile and is taking off houses and buildings. The river rises all day today. Sidney wishes he was back home. It has been a nice day today. $6\frac{1}{2}$.

*Sunday 29th, 1866.* Staid at Prairie du Chien till 2 o'clock and then a steam packet Alex McGregor came over and took us to McGregor [Iowa]. There was eight teams when we went off of the boat. Morg (one of the horses) slipped and fell off into the water and hurt his ankle. There was a man murdered last night in Prairie du Chien for his money and I saw two men arrested on the boat today for it. We went about 10 miles from McGregor and staid at the Henry House, a hotel out on the prairie. Did not go but 10 miles today.

*Monday 30th.* It rains today. It rained this morning a little. We came through a pretty village on the Turkey River about noon. Went to a small frame house and stopped to eat our dinner and then went on and about 6 o'clock we stopped at a large stone house to stay tonight. Went 2 miles north of West Union this afternoon. $2.50.

*Tuesday May 1st.* Started this morning about 7 o'clock and drove 16 miles, and stopped at a farm house to eat dinner. It is very cold today

and it snowed some this morning. It has been very bad road today the worst I ever saw, it is through what is called the Wapsie flats and it is very muddy low ground, swampy and wet. We stopped about sundown at the Farmers' Inn. Sidney says he has soured on the Wapsie. $4\frac{1}{2}$.

*Wednesday May 2nd, 1866.* Got through the Wapsie this forenoon and got to Bradford at noon and had to ford the Little Cedar River and a mile farther we came to the Big Cedar River and had to cross in a little boat and the teams had to ford the river. The colts went in all over. We had very bad roads all day today. We got to St. Charles City tonight. We are 32 miles from Mason City.

*Thursday May 3rd.* Started from St. Charles in the morning. It was prairie most of the way. We came to the Shell Rock River about noon and had to ford it. The Bridge was gone. We crossed at Rockford, ate dinner there and crossed Lime Creek at night and got to Mason City at dark.

Thus the Cannons arrived at their destination after a long and tiresome trip. Two years after her arrival in Iowa, Emeline Cannon married Thomas W. Dent, a Civil War veteran who had served with General W. T. Sherman on his march from Atlanta to the sea. In 1881 the Dents moved

to the house which had been built on the farm which had been purchased by Amaziah Cannon, Emeline's father. There they lived for the remainder of their lives — Thomas, until his death in January, 1932, and Emeline, until October, 1944.

HUGH H. SHEPARD

# Background of a Pioneer

In the northwest corner of Mason Township, Cerro Gordo County, slightly over a mile distant from the corporate limits of Mason City, stands an old stone house built in the year 1866. The location was chosen because of the creek (Willow Creek) and a small grove, then called Crab Apple Grove. The house, now known as the Dent homestead, was built by Amaziah Cannon, maternal grandfather of Louis W. Dent, the owner and occupant at the time this story was written.

Amaziah Cannon of Columbia County, Wisconsin, bought the land on October 13, 1865, and moved onto it the following year. This farm has the unique distinction of having been owned by the same family for more than eighty years and of never having had a mortgage or any other encumbrance against it.

The stone for the walls of this old house came from the river bank near Mason City, probably from the stone quarry near the Decker packing plant. The frame, floors, and partitions are hardwood. The first shingles were basswood. Rough lumber for the house was sawed at Randall's mill which stood near the location of the present

Decker plant, but the finishing lumber was hauled from Waverly. At the time this home was constructed there were but three houses between Clear Lake and Mason City.

The Cannons, who built and occupied this house, were in many ways typical of Iowa pioneers. They had come originally from New York. Cornelia Wait, daughter of Benjamin Wait and granddaughter of Pain Wait, a Revolutionary War soldier who died at the age of one hundred and seven, was born in Madison County, New York, on January 16, 1823, the youngest of thirteen children. In 1842 she married Amaziah Cannon and for thirteen years following their marriage they remained in New York State. The Cannons, with their two children, then moved to Columbia County, Wisconsin, where they purchased a farm and lived for eleven years.

In 1866 the Cannons moved again, this time to the farm in Cerro Gordo County, Iowa, on which the Dent homestead now stands. There Amaziah Cannon died in 1881. His widow, Cornelia Cannon, survived him for forty years. She remained on the old homestead with her daughter and son-in-law, Emeline and Thomas W. Dent, until her death on June 20, 1921, at the age of ninety-eight. Emeline Cannon Dent died on the home farm in 1944, at the age of ninety-six.

Although Mrs. Cannon was an invalid during the latter part of her life and was confined to her home, she had an alert, active mind and was inspired with a desire to improve the conditions in the neighborhood, so in July, 1913, she helped to organize the Clover Leaf Club among the nearby farm women. She presided at the club meetings held every third Tuesday at her home and each time she selected and read a chapter of Scripture. Music and literary numbers formed the programs, and the women brought their sewing. This club was later renamed the Cornelia Cannon Reading Circle. In 1920 she celebrated her ninety-seventh birthday anniversary by having as her guests the members of the Cornelia Cannon Reading Circle.

Because she was an invalid nearly half of her life, Mrs. Cannon was unable to visit Mason City for many years, but she was a member of the Methodist Church and was always deeply interested in its activities. She passed much of her leisure time in making patchwork quilts.

In 1916, Cornelia Cannon, then ninety-three years of age, prepared an autobiography and presented a copy bound in leather to each member of the Clover Leaf Club. This autobiography is of interest because it gives an account of farm life in New York State about 1835 and also because it illustrates the early life of an Iowa pioneer.

"I was born on a farm near the town of Brookfield, Madison County, New York, January 16, 1823. . . . At the age of two years I moved with the family to York Mills. We lived there until I was nine years old, then moved back to the farm and lived there for one year. Then my father sold the farm and moved to the town of Gerry, Chautauqua County, New York, and I lived on the farm when my father and mother died. I was married there and two children were born in Chautauqua County. We lived in the state of New York thirteen years after I was married, then moved to Columbia County, Wisconsin. We bought a farm and lived there eleven years. One child was born there. In 1866 we moved to Cerro Gordo County, Iowa, and located on a farm near Mason City, where I have lived forty-eight years. Two children were married here, my husband and one son died here, three grandchildren were born here and one grandchild married here."

Evidently reading meant a great deal to Mrs. Cannon, for her autobiography continues with the following account:

"The Bible first. I began reading a chapter each morning when fourteen years old and have made it a practice every day since, when able to do so. Have read the Bible through many times. I have taken the Northwestern Christian Advo-

cate for 56 years and have read it every Sunday. Have taken the Christian Herald for 20 years and I save the sermon for my Sunday reading. My favorite author is Ralph Connor. I have eight of his books. Other authors I like are Gene Stratton-Porter and Harold Bell Wright. His 'The Calling of Dan Mathews' is great. My favorite Bible verse is:

"*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*—JOHN 3:16."

Of her life as a girl in New York, Mrs. Cannon had many recollections.

"There were no stoves of any kind, and no way to heat the house or cook the food, except at an open fireplace. It had a large brick oven at one side, where, on baking days, usually once a week, a bright wood fire was built in the oven and kept burning until the oven was at the right heat. Then all fire, ashes and cinders were raked and swept out, and the bread, pies, cakes, beans, meat and puddings were put in and the door closed. Often bread and beans were left in over night, but cakes, pies, and puddings were taken out as soon as baked enough.

"Aside from the regular baking days, people used a bake kettle. It was large and had an iron

lid and was placed in front of the fireplace and hot coals placed around and on the lid. Or sometimes a johnnycake was placed on a clean board and set before the open fire, where it was soon cooked. Apples, potatoes, onions, were roasted on the stone hearth buried in hot embers, after wrapping in wet paper or cloth. Green corn was roasted by leaving on the husk."

In writing of "Early Farming in Timber Country of New York" and "Farming Tools Eighty Years Ago", Mrs. Cannon said:

"The first thing to be done was to build a home. The house was built of logs, the roof of split timber called shakes. The floor and doors were made about the same way as the roof — of split timbers. The windows were made of oil paper to let in the light. In the place of nails they used wooden pegs. There was no hardware nor glass.

"The furniture was all made at home — tables, stools, bedsteads, shelves, all made by members of the family from poles and split timber. Then followed clearing the land — timber cut down, piled up and burned — clearing the land to make the farm. From forty to sixty acres was about the size of farms then. They could not plow; everything was planted with a hoe among stumps and roots of the trees. They must raise enough to live on while they cleared the land for larger crops.

They could sow small grain and rake it in with a hand rake. Then when it was ripe it was cut with a sickle — a handful of straw held in the hand and cut down and laid in a bunch until there was enough for a bundle. Then it was bound with a straw band.

"When the stumps and roots were dug out the farmers could plow and drag. The teams were oxen. It took many years to make a farm in those days. The tools they had with which to build a house and to make the furniture were an ax, saw, hammer and augur. There was plenty of wild fruit — plums, cherries, strawberries, blackberries, raspberries and wintergreenberries."

Mrs. Cannon describes threshing in pioneer days.

"A hard piece of ground was cleared and the grain laid on it in bundles. Then it was threshed with a flail. This consisted of a long hardwood pole with a short, heavy piece tied to one end. The free end of the longer pole was held in the hands, and the grain was threshed by beating with the flail. The chaff and dust were winnowed out by pouring it from basket to basket and letting the wind blow through it.

"The first horsepower machine I ever saw was a tread-power — one horse tied in a box-like place, which was set on an incline, and his weight,

as he walked, ran the machine. It was many years before they used a sweep-power. When they invented a fanning mill to clean the grain it was a great saving of hard work. The separator did not come until long after. I never saw a separator while I lived in New York.

"About 1850, before we left New York, the cradle was invented. This was used in harvesting grain. It was a hand machine, the grain being cut and laid in bundles ready to bind by hand. In Wisconsin we saw the first horse reaper and years after a machine was made on which two men rode and bound the grain. I have seen a great many changes in farming tools and ways of doing farm work."

Mrs. Cannon tells of Christmas and New Year's celebrations in olden times.

"Christmas eighty years ago was more like the Sabbath day. It was regarded as a sacred day and always kept as such. All unnecessary work was left to later days. Only children were remembered with presents. They always hung up their stockings, but never found toys in them except home made ones. They were filled with plenty of nuts, apples, doughnuts, and cookies. The little folks were just as happy as children are at the present time.

"They had nice Christmas dinners, but every-

thing found on the table was raised on the farm. All fruits, vegetables, maple sugar, honey, and everything made from grains, were to be found on the table. There were no parties or sleigh rides on that day, but there were plenty of them on New Years. On New Years eve there would be a watch meeting and at 12 o'clock the New Year was greeted with songs and bells. The day following was observed more as we celebrate Christmas with parties and rides, roasting apples, popping corn, etc."

Cornelia Cannon also tells about her school experiences.

"The spelling book came first — A, B, C, then the two letters, Ab, Ce, De, and so on. Then came the three letters until I was able to read words. When this was accomplished I read in the testament, then the American reader, and last in the English reader, in which I continued to read while I attended school. I studied grammar, primary and first geography, arithmetic, and writing. A great deal of attention was given to writing and spelling."

Woman's work was never done in pioneer days. There was always sewing or weaving to be finished after the day's cooking, washing, or cleaning was out of the way.

"We never had time for fancy work when I

was young. We had to work hard for a living and to get our clothes. Everything we wore and all our bedding was then hand made. Instead of cotton we had linen. The flax was raised and harvested. When the seed was ripe the flax straw was spread on the grass to cure. Then it was broken to free it from the stalk and left only the flax fibre. The fibre was then drawn through a hackle to straighten it and was then ready to spin. This was done on a flax wheel. From the wheel it was ready to weave into cloth. When made, the cloth was spread on the grass and kept wet to bleach in the sun. It was then ready to make into sheets, pillow cases, underwear, or colored for dresses and aprons. It would wear for years. There were several garments kept in the family that had been worn by all the babies. My mother had thirteen children of which I am the youngest.

"On the farm in olden times everyone kept a flock of sheep to provide winter clothes. In the spring the sheep were taken to a pond or stream and their wool washed, and as soon as dry sheared from the sheep. The wool was sent to the mills to be carded into rolls. It was brought home and spun into yarns on a large spinning wheel. By the way, my old spinning wheel is carefully preserved by a granddaughter, and occupies a place of honor in her home.

"The yarn was woven into cloth on a loom, and the cloth, if for dresses or skirts, or for shirts for men and boys, was colored. If for under clothes or blankets, it was left white. When I was about fourteen years old I had dresses colored and pressed at the factory for nice dresses. It looked very much like ladies' cloth or lightweight broadcloth. One dress was red and one was black, and I had a cloak of green. When I was fourteen I had my first calico aprons. I had two — one white was for 'best'.

"All clothing was made by hand, even men's and boys' suits were home made. The cloth was sent to the factory to be colored, fulled and pressed. A tailoress went around from house to house and made them all by hand. It was four days' work to make a coat, two days to make a pair of pants, and one day to make a vest. All stockings were knit by hand and caps for children and boys, just like the stocking caps of today. Every girl was taught to knit as soon as she was four years old, and helped all they could to make stockings for themselves. All mittens were knit. They were made double for men and boys. There was no other kind to be had. We never sat down with idle hands. There was sewing or knitting, spinning or weaving, ready for the evening or any time when not busy about the house.

"We did not change styles in wearing apparel in those days. The same pattern was used for dresses for years. The skirt of the dress was about two and one-half yards around, cut straight with waist plain and short and straight sleeves. The waist and skirt were sewed together and a string run in to gather and to fit the waist. Little children's dresses were made the same and skirts hung about to the shoe top.

"The cloak was called a mantle. It was cut straight and gathered at the neck, and a cape, reaching over the shoulders, finished the garment. It was made of plain woolen cloth and lined with flannel. Usually children's mantles were of bright colors. Women wore hoods in winter, and a home made bonnet, made of pasteboard and covered with cambric, usually light brown in color, was the head dress in summer. All gloves were handknit. The shoes were made by a traveling shoemaker who went from home to home and made boots for men and boys and shoes for women and girls. A pair of those shoes would last for years, and when outgrown by one child there were smaller children to take them."

In the newspaper report of the death of Cornelia Wait Cannon appearing in the *Mason City Globe-Gazette,* the paper described her as one of the most remarkable women in that section of the

State and noted that her lifetime spanned the years from the time James Monroe, author of the Monroe Doctrine, was President of the United States to June 20, 1921, the date of her death at the age of ninety-eight. Cornelia Wait Cannon was five years old when construction of the first railroad was started and six years old before the first locomotive pulled a train of cars upon it. She was fifteen years old when the first steamship crossed the Atlantic and twenty-one years old when the first telegraph instrument began its practical service. She was twenty-three before the first sewing machine was invented and thirty-five when the Atlantic cable was laid. She was thirty-eight when the Civil War broke out and forty when the Emancipation Proclamation set four million people free. She was fifty-three when the telephone was invented and fifty-seven when the first electric street car began to shuttle back and forth weaving the fabric of mighty city life.

Cornelia Wait Cannon did, indeed, witness many changes during her lifetime. Like other pioneer women she worked with determination in meeting the hardships of frontier life. Unlike many pioneer women, she lived long enough to enjoy the fruits of her labors.

HUGH H. SHEPARD

## Indian Corn as a Substitute

In 1946 Americans are urged to use more corn meal as a substitute for wheat flour. One hundred years ago Iowans were advised to use corn meal as a substitute for potatoes. The March 24, 1847, issue of the Iowa City *Standard* contained a number of recipes for the use of corn meal. Although no explanation as to the reason for substituting corn products for potatoes was given, the fact that these recipes are credited to Elihu Burritt suggests that a movement was on foot to send aid to Ireland where the potato crop had failed. Burritt had been in Europe in 1846 and while there had helped to form a League of Universal Brotherhood.

### *Superior Johnny Cake*

Take one pint of cream, half a pint of meal, two eggs, two table spoonfuls of wheat flour, half a teaspoonful of carbonate of soda, and salt to suit the taste. Bake it in a hot oven.

### *An Excellent Johnny Cake*

Take one quart of milk, three eggs, one teaspoonful of carbonate of soda, one teacup of

wheat flour, and Indian meal sufficient to make a batter of the consistency of pancakes. Bake quick, in pans previously buttered, and eat it warm with butter or milk.

### *Batter Cakes*

No. 1.— Prepare a thick batter by wetting sifted Indian meal with cold water, and then stirring it into that which is boiling. Salt, and while it is lukewarm, add yeast; when risen, bake in thin cakes over the fire.

No. 2.— Take some [sour] milk, correct its acidity with carbonate of soda, add salt and meal to make a thick batter and cook as before.

No. 3.— Stir a quart of boiling water into the same quantity of Indian meal, add a little salt and two eggs well beaten; cook as before.

### *Superior Boiled Pudding*

To one quart of Indian meal, add three pints of hot milk, half a pint of molasses or treacle, a dessert spoonful of salt, an ounce or more of beef suet shred fine. Stir the materials well together, tie them in a cloth, allowing room for the pudding to swell one eighth larger, and boil it six or eight hours. The longer it boils the better.

### *Corn Muffins*

Take one quart of buttermilk, three or four eggs well beaten, a small quantity of flour; mix them together, and then make it quite thick with corn meal; add a teaspoonful of melted butter, and salt to suit the taste; butter the pan in which it is baked.

### *Corn and Flour Bread*

Prepare a thin batter by wetting sifted meal in cold water, and then stirring it into that which is boiling; salt, and when it is lukewarm, add yeast, and as much flour as there is common meal; bake in deep dishes in an oven when risen.

### *Yankee Brown Bread*

To two quarts of corn meal, pour one quart of boiling water; stir yeast into two quarts of rye meal, and knead together with two quarts of luke warm water. Add if you choose, one gill of molasses or treacle.

### *Hasty Pudding*

Put in three pints of water and a tablespoonful of salt, and when it begins to boil, stir in meal until it is thick enough for the table. Cook twenty or thirty minutes. Eaten with milk, butter or treacle.

### *Fried Hasty Pudding*

Cut cold pudding in smooth slices, and fry brown in a little butter or pork fat.

### *Hasty Pudding Bread*

Prepare hasty pudding as before; when luke-warm add yeast, and after rising, bake in a deep dish in a hot oven.

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